ever deserve it? What do guilt and innocence depend on? On mere chance/* etc., etc,

There is someone who really takes a superior point of view! And are these considerations really involved? Rightly or wrongly society establishes rules outside of which the citizen is recognized to be answerable to the law. If these rules are arbitrary, what does it matter? That the man who escapes them is an innocent man, a martyr, a saint, or a fool is not the question, and Gourmont talks of this with the *superiority* of Moliere's *bourgeois gentilhomme* saying of the dancers after the minuet: "Those people certainly put on quite a jig/* — But, as a child, did he never play? Didn't his heart ever overflow upon hearing himself falsely accused of *having cheated?* Or did he already reply to his playmates: "What is cheating? Does one ever *cheat?*" etc., etc. But the truth is that he never had any playmates and that he never played except alone.

12

December

Again my mind is disjointed, upset; my flesh weak, restless, wildly listless. My whole organism is like those oversonorous houses in which from the attic can be heard everything that is going on in the kitchen and in the cellar.

Valentine came to spend six days with us; her presence has certainly contributed greatly to setting my nerves on edge.

13

December

Frightful, wonderful squall all night long. My mind seems to be lifted up by the wind — carried off like a kite — a kite on the end of a rubber band.

I find and reread a letter from Paul Claudel (1899): "Your mind has no slope/' he said to me. That is just what is needed. No praise is more

precious to me.

Gourmont—a desperately opaque soul.

Absence of sympathy — lack of imagination. This goes well with ignorance of dizziness; but Gerard doesn't know that this comes from his inability to imagine what he does not feel. This is what is often called *sang-froid;* merely impotence of the imagination. The most gifted natures are perhaps also the most trembling.